Appl. No. 10/623,240
Amdt. dated August 18, 2005
Reply to Office Action of 05/19/2005

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (currently amended) In a telecommunications network having network elements and through which call connections are formed between calling stations and called stations to permit telephonic communications to be effectuated, an improvement of apparatus for facilitating amelioration of network congestion caused by a mass call event in which a plurality of call connections are requested to be made to a selected set of called stations within a selected time period, said apparatus comprising:

a mass call event detector adapted automatically to receive indications of selected attempts to form call connections between selected calling stations and selected called stations during operation of the telecommunication network, said mass call event detector for detecting occurrence of the mass call event responsive to the indications of the selected attempts; and

a notifier coupled to said mass call event detector to receive indications of detection of occurrence of the mass call event, said notifier for notifying the network elements of the mass call event, automatically and free of manual interaction; and

a signal transfer point, wherein said mass call event detector and said notifier are embodied within said signal transfer point.

2.   (canceled)

3.   (original) The apparatus of claim 2 wherein the signal transfer point comprises an application processor and wherein said mass call event detector and said notifier are embodied at the application processor.

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4.   (original) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the called stations of the selected set with which the call connections are requested to be made each has associated therewith a telephonic identifier and wherein said notifier further notifies the network elements of the mass call event with the telephonic identifier of the called stations that form the selected set.

5.   (original) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the network elements comprise at least one application processor and wherein said notifier notifies the at least one application processor of the mass call event.

6.   (original) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein said mass call detector detects occurrence of the mass call event when the indications of the selected attempts are beyond a selected threshold.

7.   (original) The apparatus of claim 6 wherein the selected threshold used by said mass call detector pursuant to detection of the occurrence of the mass call event comprises a selectable value.

8.   (original) The apparatus of claim 7 wherein the telecommunications network is operated by a network operator and wherein the selectable value that comprises the selected threshold is selected by the network operator.

9.   (original) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the indications of the selected attempts to form the connections to which said mass call event detector is adapted to receive and responsive to which the occurrence of the mass call event is detected comprise derived parameters.

10.   (original) The apparatus of claim 9 wherein the derived parameters forming the indications of the selected attempts are derived from statistically-computed indicia of call connection attempts.

11.   (original) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the attempts to form call connections include generation of IAM messages and wherein the indications of the selected attempts to form the call connections to which said mass call event detector is adapted to receive comprise selected ones of the IAM messages.

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12.   (original) The apparatus of claim 11 wherein the IAM messages are generated by calling parties and include telephonic identifiers identifying called parties with which call connections are attempted by the calling parties, and wherein said mass call event detector maintains a first count of IAM messages containing selected telephonic identifiers.

13.   (original) The apparatus of claim 12 wherein said mass call event detector maintains the first count of the IAM messages during a first selected time period.

14.   (original) The apparatus of claim 13 wherein said mass call event detector maintains a subsequent count of IAM messages containing a subset of the selected telephone identifiers during a second time period, subsequent to the first time period.

15.   (original) The apparatus of claim 14 wherein said mass call detector detects the occurrence of the mass call events responsive to the subsequent count made during the second time period.

16.   (currently amended) In a method of communicating in a telecommunications network having network elements and through which call connections are formed between calling stations and called stations to permit telephonic communications to be effectuated, an improvement of a method for facilitating amelioration of network congestion caused by a mass call event in which a plurality of call connections are requested to be made to a selected set of called stations within a selected time period, said method comprising:

detecting occurrence of the mass call event responsive to indications of selected attempts to form call connections between selected calling stations and selected called stations during operation of the telecommunication network; ~~and~~

notifying the network elements of the mass call event responsive to detections made during said operation of detecting, notifications made automatically and free of manual interaction and

<u>wherein said detecting and said notifying occurs within a signal transfer point.</u>

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17.   (original) The method of claim 16 wherein said operation of detecting comprises maintaining a count of call requests to call stations, the called stations identified by telephonic identifiers.

18.   (original) The method of claim 16 wherein the mass call event is detected during said operation of detecting when the indications of the selected attempts are beyond a selected threshold.

19.   (original) The method of claim 18 further comprising the operation, prior to said operation of detecting, of selecting the selected threshold.

20.   (original) The method of claim 16 wherein the indications responsive to which the mass call event is detected during said operation of detecting comprises derived values.

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